

Unearthing the Buried City

The Janet Translation Project

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This document is part of *Unearthing the Buried City: The Janet Translation Project*, a series of AI-assisted English translations of Pierre Janet's works.

In his seminal 1970 book: *The Discovery of the Unconscious: The History and Evolution of Dynamic Psychiatry*, Henri Ellenberger wrote:

Thus, Janet's work can be compared to a vast city buried beneath ashes, like Pompeii. The fate of any buried city is uncertain. It may remain buried forever. It may remain concealed while being plundered by marauders. But it may also perhaps be unearthed some day and brought back to life (p. 409).

This project takes Ellenberger's metaphor seriously — and literally. The goal of this work is to unearth the buried city of Janet's writings and make them accessible to the English-speaking world, where much of his legacy remains obscured or misunderstood.

Pierre Janet was a pioneer of dynamic psychology, psychopathology, hypnosis, and dissociation. His influence on Freud, Jung, and the broader psychotherapeutic tradition is profound, yet the bulk of his original writings remain untranslated or scattered in partial form. These AI-assisted translations aim to fill that gap — provisionally — by making Janet's works readable and searchable in English for the first time.

This is not an academic translation, nor does it claim to replace one. It is a faithful, literal rendering produced with the aid of AI language tools such as Chat GPT and DeepL and lightly edited for clarity. Its purpose is preservation, accessibility, and revival. By bringing these texts to light, I hope to:

- Preserve Janet's contributions in a readable English form
- Spark renewed interest among scholars, clinicians, and students
- Inspire human translators to produce definitive, academically rigorous editions

Unconscious Acts and the Doubling of Personality During Induced Somnambulism¹

Pierre Janet

The suggestions that can be imposed on hypnotized subjects during sleep, or even during wakefulness, have already been studied and described in great detail by many observers; however, they can still give rise to some interesting remarks for psychology. Having had the opportunity to observe a few facts of this kind, I would like to present them, so that it may be possible to critique them and to relate them to analogous facts, before studying them in a more complete manner.

I

The subject on whom these investigations were conducted is a young woman, nineteen years old, whom I was able to study with precision and over a fairly long period, thanks to the kindness of Dr. Powilewicz; we will refer to her by the letter L. This person was suffering from severe hysteria, and at the time I came to know her, she was having daily attacks lasting several hours. Hypnotic sleep and suggestions, moreover, had the most evident therapeutic influence on this condition². It was during one of these crises that we put L. to sleep for the first time; a few passes were enough to stop the convulsions and the delirium and to replace the agitation with the most complete hypnotic sleep.

Once asleep, L. could hear me and respond to my questions — something she was not able to do a moment earlier during the hysterical crisis. It was easy to provoke, by suggestion, all the characteristic phenomena of somnambulism. Contractures, movements, hallucinations — all were produced at will, which from the very first time indicated a fairly deep somnambulism. It was easy to wake the patient with a word and then to put her back to sleep as agreed upon, for posthypnotic suggestions were also quite successful. All the phenomena I am about to reproduce are well known, and I will not insist on them unless a detail is of interest. In the first sessions, the suggestions to be carried out seemed to have to be understood and accepted by the subject. If I commanded her to raise her arms, L. would begin by answering “yes” in a very low voice, then she would raise her arms, which remained contracted above her head; if I commanded her to carry out an action or to experience a hallucination upon awakening, she would again respond “yes,” and then upon waking she would execute the command that had been given and accepted. This acceptance was indispensable. One day I gave her a command during her sleep for an act that no doubt displeased her greatly;

¹ Janet, Pierre. “Les actes inconscients et le dédoublement de la personnalité pendant le somnambulisme provoqué,” *Revue Philosophique*, xxii (1886), II, pp. 577-592.

² We will publish in the *Revue Scientifique* a more detailed study on the illness of L. and on the hypnotic treatment that we applied to her under the direction of Dr. Powilewicz.

she answered “no” several times, and upon waking, she did not carry out the command. At certain moments, L. showed a great disposition toward resistance and answered “no” to most of the suggestions — which then were not carried out. However, sleep itself was not interrupted, and upon waking, the forgetfulness was always complete.

After four sessions, L. for the first time experienced a sort of catalepsy that occurred naturally in the course of sleep when I tried to deepen her sleep by continuing the passes for a longer time. The limbs remained in the position where they were placed; the movements continued, and the expression on her face became harmonized with them. This state lasted only a short time and was soon replaced by ordinary somnambulism; but the latter now seemed deeper, and her resistance to suggestions was diminished. Not only did she no longer affirm obedience, but now she gave no sign of acceptance, responded nothing to the suggestion, and executed it immediately. More complex acts, associated with hallucinations, could thus be executed both during sleep and upon awakening. It was at this point that I attempted to verify the experiments of M. Delboeuf³ on the preservation of memory after hypnotic sleep, and I arrived at identical results: when the subject is suddenly awakened during sleep in the middle of a suggested act, they retain, in fact, the memory as they would during waking life. This is equally the case, moreover, when it is not an act, but a movement or even a simple hallucination. I said to L. that “there is a green Bengal fire in the room,” and she admires it, then, choosing a moment when she is entirely still in her contemplation, I wake her suddenly. It was enough to clap my hands — this was our agreed-upon signal — and upon waking she looks everywhere with astonishment: “Why did you put out the green Bengal fire?... ah! it was a dream.” However, it seems to me there is one exception to the rule indicated by M. Delboeuf. When the subject has already fallen asleep suddenly in the middle of a waking act, the idea that appears in consciousness after an equally sudden awakening is not the memory of the somnambulism; it is instead the continuation of the act that began and was interrupted during the waking state. The somnambulism is as if it had not existed at all, and the two moments of wakefulness seem to join seamlessly⁴. In the middle of a conversation, L. falls asleep before finishing her sentence. After a quarter of an hour of sleep, she awakens and then calmly finishes the conversation, without any awareness that she had slept. The same phenomenon also occurs during somnambulism. Once I put her back to sleep, L. continues some part of the act that began during the previous somnambulism. One could thus witness with her two conversations, very strangely interrupted and resumed — one during the waking states, the other during the somnambulist states.

II

³ *Revue Philosophique*, 1886, Vol II, p. 441.

⁴ To verify this detail, one must use subjects who are very sensitive to suggestion, who can be put to sleep all at once without any technique, simply by means of a signal agreed upon during one of the previous somnambulist episodes. I would put L. to sleep in a few seconds merely by raising my hand.

At that point, it was not difficult to see that most of the suggestions no longer presented themselves in the same way as at the beginning: they had become unconscious. Previously, L. knew what I was commanding and knew what she was doing when she executed it, since she sometimes even argued about the command. Now she no longer hears the command, or at least always replies — and with evident sincerity — that she did not hear it, and yet she executes it with great precision, though without knowing what she is doing. I give her the command suddenly: “Put your hands on your nose”; her hands move to the tip of her nose. She is asked what she is doing; she always replies that she is doing nothing and continues to converse for a long time without suspecting that her hands are still moving about at the tip of her nose. I make her walk across the room; she continues talking and believes she is still sitting. What is curious is that she hears me perfectly when I speak with her and responds sensibly, but if I interrupt a sentence to give a sudden command, she hears the sentence and not the command, which is executed without her knowing it. Naturally, she also has no memory of the suggestion thus carried out. For example, I would command her to cry, and she would really sob, but in the midst of her sobs she would go on talking about very cheerful things, and once the sobs stopped, no trace of that sadness — which had never become conscious — remained. I even asked her one day to make every effort to resist me; she didn’t seem to understand very well, since she had no memory of her obedience. She assured me, laughing, that she certainly would not carry out the act I was about to order. I give a command, and my command is immediately executed; but she continues laughing and says: “Just try commanding me — I won’t do a thing.” In a word, anything relating to suggestion no longer entered into her consciousness.

Perhaps this unconsciousness of suggestions should be related to another phenomenon of the same kind that had struck me from the beginning and that I could not understand. While awake, but before entering into somnambulism, L. was completely anesthetized: she had no cutaneous sensitivity either on the right or on the left, and she did not perceive pain, heat, or contact⁵. She also had no muscular sense and did not feel the position of her limbs; although she said so herself, she would lose her legs in bed, yet she was persuaded that she was standing upright in front of everyone. I had noticed that this loss of muscular sense was accompanied by a very marked diminution in the ability to judge distances visually. However, if we put L. into a cataleptic state⁶, the limbs would remain in the positions in which they were placed; movements would continue; the face would take on a matching expression. Were there not suggestions at play in this muscular sense? If I squeeze her hand, her face takes on an expression of fury and her arm strikes out with blows of the fist; and even though she knows that her fist is clenched, she feels nothing — yet during the somnambulism or in catalepsy, she never hesitated to direct her blow if I raised her arm. Is this not a

⁵ It is no doubt for this reason that during the state of somnambulism, L. never had contractures produced by superficial frictions of the skin.

⁶ This was achieved by compressing the eyeballs during somnambulism with the eyes closed, much more reliably than by opening the eyes to light, which produced somnambulism with the eyes open.

form of unconscious suggestion similar to what we discussed earlier? Is this anesthesia of hysterics, as M. Bernheim said in the case of the hysterical lover⁷, merely a “purely psychic anesthesia”? Does the sensation really enter her brain, while the hysteric unconsciously neutralizes it with her imagination, and does it still produce the same effects as if it were truly perceived?

Let us finally note, as M. Bernheim and M. Richet have already observed, that the same kind of suggestion was also possible in the waking state. If I gave L. a command before putting her to sleep, she did not seem to hear it, even though she was awake, and she executed the act mechanically. Indeed, one day I tried another experiment without warning her: I asked another person, M. M..., to give her a command in my absence, but using my name. In the middle of the day, while M. M... was speaking with her, he suddenly interrupted the conversation and said: “M. Janet wants both your arms to rise into the air and remain paralyzed.” This occurred immediately; both arms remained contracted above her head. But L. had no emotional reaction and continued what she was saying. When a permanent action like the contracture of the arms was produced, one could force L. to become aware of it by compelling her to look at her arms, to observe them, and to try to move them. Then she would become frightened, moan, and begin to have a crisis, which could only be stopped by a single word. But once she was calmed and her tears were still in her eyes, she no longer remembered anything and resumed her activities exactly where she had left off.

Everything I have just said applies to suggestions of actions, in the execution of which no kind of consciousness could be detected. When, on the other hand, a suggestion of hallucination was made, the command was no more heard than before, but the hallucination itself was conscious — that is, it suddenly invaded consciousness, without L. being able to know where it came from. “I tell you,” I said to her, “you are going to drink a glass of cognac.” She had heard nothing and her arm rose automatically; but when it approached her lips, she tasted it and, when asked, said that she had drunk some cognac and that she was pleased, because the doctor had forbidden it to her. The forgetting, moreover, is very rapid, and one must question her quickly to verify this fleeting consciousness of the hallucination. Except in such cases, where the suggestion obviously could not be carried out without some perception, consciousness seemed completely abolished.

III

Once convinced of this unconsciousness — which has undoubtedly already been noted by many observers, though I had not yet observed it to this degree — I attempted to determine how far it extended; that is to say, what acts or psychological phenomena could take on this character. At the same time, I tried to shed some light on a small problem in psychology that has previously been raised in connection with hypnotic suggestion.

⁷ *Revue de l'hypnotisme*, 1886, p. 68.

M. Paul Janet, in the articles he has published on hypnotism⁸ — through which he sought to bring to philosophers certain curious phenomena, too often neglected in the study of the human mind — raised some serious doubts about a particular genre of suggestion. Messrs. Richet and Bernheim had already cited examples of suggestions that the subject was to carry out not upon awakening, but only after a certain number of days. “To A. S.,” says M. Bernheim, “I suggested during somnambulism that he would come to see me after thirteen days; awakened, he remembered nothing. On the thirteenth day, he came as if nothing had happened.” M. Paul Janet wrote about this: “I admit that these forgotten memories, as M. Ch. Richet calls them, can reawaken at any moment depending on the circumstances. I also understand the return of memory at a time fixed by the emergence of the images and acts that follow one another — the operator associating them with the appearance of a vivid sensation; for example: ‘The day you see Mr. So-and-so, you will embrace him.’ The sight of Mr. So-and-so becomes a stimulus that awakens the idea. But what I do not understand as well is the awakening on a fixed day without any point of reference other than the numbering of time, for example, thirteen days. Thirteen days is not a sensation; it is an abstraction. To explain this phenomenon, we must suppose an unconscious faculty of measuring time; that is, an unknown faculty.” M. Ch. Richet responded with a few words⁹, but if I am not mistaken, he merely confirmed the accuracy of the fact and brought it closer to other facts of the same kind: “Intelligence,” he says, “can work outside of the self, and since it works, it can measure time; it is thus an evidently unconscious operation, much like the idea of a name, of a place, or of a person, in response to the problem of forgetfulness — these are acts accomplished without the knowledge of the self.”

To clarify this question a little, I confess that I would not pose the problem in the same way as M. Paul Janet¹⁰. “This,” he says, “is a new fact of a completely different order from the preceding ones and which, if it were true, would bring us into the domain of mysterious and unknown faculties, similar to those of animal magnetism, second sight, presentiment, etc.” I cannot share that view. The somnambulist to whom one has suggested to carry out an act in thirteen days does not need any particular and mysterious faculty to measure time; she finds herself under the same conditions as we all do: she knows the day and the date; she sees the clocks, and I do not understand why she would measure time in a mysterious way, any more than we measure it in a normal state. But, one may say, she has no memory of it, she has no consciousness of the suggestion; that does not prevent the day and the date from making an impression on her, to carry out the suggestion at the given hour, if only she counts them. It is true that this counting must be done unconsciously, since she says her consciousness has no memory of being asked to carry out an act in thirteen days. But in that case, it is only a faculty for *unconsciously counting* real things, and not a mysterious faculty of *measuring time*, which seems to me to be useless. In this respect, I find that M.

⁸ *Revue littéraire*, July 26, August 2, 9, 16, 1884.

⁹ *Ibid.*, August 23, 1884

¹⁰ Reply to Mr. Richet. *Ibidem*

Paul Janet is absolutely right to distinguish this operation from a dreamlike memory and this particular type of suggestion from all the others. When an ordinary suggestion is made: "The day you see Mr. X..., you will embrace him," the somnambulist, once awakened, does not retain this idea in her consciousness, but rather keeps a latent association of ideas that does not immediately manifest as a psychological phenomenon. We ourselves do not know all the latent associations there are in our minds; the sight of such-and-such a person can awaken in us a sad idea that we did not suspect. The awakened somnambulist has in her mind a latent association such as: "The sight of Mr. X... will awaken in her the idea of embracing him." There is nothing in that which lies outside the bounds of normal psychology. But in the second case, when one says to her: "You will do such-and-such an act in thirteen days," her thought cannot completely forget the suggestion upon awakening; it cannot remain entirely unconscious until the thirteenth day, because the thirteenth day, being in no way different from others, would not awaken the idea of the suggestion any more than the twelfth or fourteenth day would. In order for the connection between the idea and the thirteenth day not to be broken, it is necessary for her to say to herself: "It is today, the first day... then the second..." and finally: "This is the thirteenth," and the association is formed. Now clearly, not everyone sees somnambulists counting, and we do not know whether they actually do so. The somnambulist awakened does not retain any awareness of such observations or counting. Yet this counting must exist. If it is not just an association, it is a purely unconscious judgment. And a purely unconscious judgment, as Mr. Latent said, but also as true psychological facts show, is something quite different from a latent association.

The problem thus reduced to terms that seemed simpler to me, I first tried to verify the reality of the fact in question. The subject I was working with showed clear examples of latent associations; the very way in which I put her to sleep by raising her arm was an excellent one. One day I questioned her in the waking state to see if she knew how I put her to sleep; she was entirely unaware. I spoke to her of a signal — the raised arm; she thought it was a joke, and yet the raised arm immediately put her to sleep. Well then — could she similarly hold unconscious judgments and perform calculations without knowing it?

Once L.'s state of somnambulism was established, I gave her the following suggestion: "When I have clapped my hands twelve times, you will fall asleep again." As we have already noted in this case, the command did not appear to enter her consciousness. Upon waking, the forgetting was total; it would indeed have been strange if she had retained upon waking the memory of something that had not been conscious during the somnambulistic state. This forgetting — which is important here — was guaranteed to me, first of all, by the preceding state of sleep, which was a genuine hypnotic sleep with all its characteristic signs; then by the agreement of all those who have studied such questions and have all noted forgetting upon awakening from similar suggestions; and finally by all the preceding experiences in which I had seen this unconsciousness form little by little. Other people surrounded L. and spoke to her about various things; however, after a few steps back, I clapped my hands five times, the claps being fairly

spaced and quite soft. Noticing that the subject paid no attention to me and was speaking animatedly, I approached her and said: "Did you hear what I just did?"

"What? I wasn't paying attention."

"And this?" (I clap my hands again.)

"You just clapped your hands."

"How many times?"

"Once."

I step back and continue clapping, one faint clap at a time; L., distracted, does not listen to me. When I have thus clapped six times which, with the previous ones, make twelve, L. immediately stops, closes her eyes, and falls backward, asleep. "Why are you sleeping?" I ask her.

"I don't know," she replies, "it came over me all of a sudden."

If I'm not mistaken, this is the experiment of MM. Richet and Bernheim, but in a much simpler form. The somnambulist must also be counting, but instead of counting days — which would suggest a mistaken idea of temporal measurement — she simply counted sounds. There is no need to assume any unknown faculty here. She had to have listened and counted them, but without knowing it — unconsciously. The experiment was easy to repeat, and I repeated it in many different ways: L. counted thus unconsciously up to 43, and the claps were sometimes regular, sometimes irregular, yet she never once got the result wrong. One of the most striking experiments was the following: I commanded her, "At the 3rd clap your hands will rise; at the 5th they will lower; at the 6th you will make a thumb-your-nose gesture; at the 9th you will walk around the room; at the 16th you will fall asleep in an armchair." No memory upon awakening, and all these acts were performed at the indicated number, while during the entire time L. responded to questions addressed to her and had no awareness that she was counting sounds, making a face, or walking around.

After repeating the experiment, it was necessary to think of varying it. I thus tried to elicit very simple unconscious judgments: "When I say two identical letters one after the other, you will become paralyzed¹¹." After awakening, I whisper the letters "a... c... d... e... a... a..." L. remains motionless and completely contracted. This is an unconscious judgment of resemblance. Here are judgments of difference: "You will fall asleep when I say an odd number," or "Your hands will begin to turn over each other when I say a woman's name." The result is the same: as long as I murmur even numbers or men's names, nothing happens; the suggestion is executed when I give the sign. L. had therefore unconsciously listened, compared, and judged these differences.

I then try to complicate the experiment to see how far this unconscious faculty of judgment could go: "When the sum of the numbers I am going to say equals 10, your hands will send kisses." Same precautions; she is awakened; the forgetting is confirmed, and far from her — while she is speaking with others who

¹¹ The suggestions are always made during clearly established hypnotic sleep, then L. is completely awakened some time afterward. The signals and the execution occur during the waking state. The experiment can very well be carried out entirely during the waking state, and in my opinion, it has the same characteristics; but the forgetting is even more certain when the subject has been awakened after the suggestion.

distract her as much as possible — I whisper: “2... 3... 1... 4,” and the movement occurs. Then I try more complicated sums or other operations: “When the numbers I am about to say, taken two by two and subtracted one from the other, give a remainder of 6...” or even multiplications and very simple divisions. All of it is carried out almost without error, except when the operation becomes too complicated and can no longer be done in one's head. As I noted, there was no new faculty involved here, but rather ordinary phenomena carried out unconsciously.

It seems to me that these experiments relate quite directly to the problem raised in the *Revue littéraire*. The facts reported were entirely accurate: somnambulists can count the days and the hours that separate them from the execution of a suggestion, even though they have no memory of the suggestion itself. Outside of their consciousness — we do not know how — there is a persistence of memory, an ever-awake attention, and a judgment fully capable of counting days, since it can even perform multiplications and divisions. But it is no less true that one hardly expected to find such automatic and unconscious phenomena, and that their study may have the most important consequences for psychology.

IV

Once the preceding experiments had been explained, we naturally arrived at a new phenomenon that has often been presented as mysterious — the starting point of the entire doctrine of spiritism — and which nevertheless seems to me the natural development of the facts already observed. There evidently existed in L.'s mind important psychological operations that took place outside of her normal consciousness. How to make them perceptible through a sign, through some kind of language? Words revealed nothing to me; I tried another kind of sign — writing¹². “When I clap my hands, you will take a pencil and paper from the table and write the word ‘bonjour’.” At the given signal, the word is written quickly, but in legible handwriting; L. was unaware of what she was doing. “You will write this sentence: ‘I do everything I do without knowing it.’” The sentence is written, but it still seems to be nothing more than pure automatism, which does not show much intelligence. “You will multiply 739 by 42.” The right hand writes the numbers regularly, carries out the operation, and does not stop until the task is complete. During all this time, L., fully awake, was telling me about her day and did not stop speaking once, even while her right hand was calculating correctly. I decided to give more independence to this unconscious intelligence: “You will write a letter of any kind.” Here is what she unconsciously wrote, once she was awakened: “Madame, I am sorry I cannot come this Sunday as promised; I must apologize. I would be pleased to come with you, but I cannot accept for that day. Your friend, L. P.S. Many greetings to the children, please.” This automatic letter is coherent and shows a certain reflection. L. was talking about something else entirely and responding to several people while writing it. In fact, she understood

¹² The setup of the experiment is always the same.

nothing of the letter when I showed it to her and claimed I had forged her signature. Something quite curious: when I wanted to repeat the experiment, L. wrote a second letter exactly like the first, without changing a single word; it seemed as if the mechanism had set off in that direction and could not be altered. The handwriting of these letters is interesting: it is similar to L.'s normal handwriting, but not identical; it is slanted and very loose; the words tend to stretch out indefinitely. M. Ch. Richet, to whom I showed these fragments of automatic writing, told me this trait is a constant one in the writings of mediums he has observed — that in their letters, it is often a single word that fills an entire line.

Automatic writing is a well-known fact: allow me to recall here a very remarkable passage by M. Taine, who shows quite clearly the possibility and the significance of this phenomenon: "The stranger a fact is, the more instructive it is." In this respect, the spiritualist manifestations themselves set us on the path to these discoveries, by showing us the coexistence, at the same instant, in the same individual, of two thoughts, two wills, two distinct actions — one of which is conscious, and the other unconscious, and which is attributed to invisible beings... There is someone who, while talking or singing, writes — without looking at the paper — full phrases, and even entire pages, without any awareness of what is being written. To my mind, her sincerity is perfect; and yet she declares that, when reading the page afterward, she has no idea what she wrote; when she reads it, she is astonished, sometimes even alarmed... Certainly, what we observe is a splitting of the self, the simultaneous presence of two parallel and independent series of ideas, two centers of action — or, if you will, two moral persons placed side by side in the same brain, each with its own task and its own different output: one on the stage, the other behind the curtain...¹³ This phenomenon was also very thoroughly studied by an esteemed English psychologist, Mr. F. W. Myers, who devoted himself to the difficult study of these unknown psychological phenomena¹⁴. But what seems interesting to me in the cases I have reported is that I was able to witness the development of this automatic writing — to witness, so to speak, its formation; and that I was able, for a time, to observe its consequences.

After having L. write several automatic letters of this kind, I had the idea of questioning her at the very moment when I was making the suggestion, and of commanding her to respond to me in writing. I began by asking the question during sleep; then I would awaken the subject in order to be more certain of the forgetting and of the unconsciousness — and to obtain a truly automatic response. At a given signal, L. would take the pen and write the answer without knowing it.

¹³ Taine: *On Intelligence*, preface, I, p. 16. This passage is already cited in the very interesting thesis by Dr. Bérillon on "cerebral duality or the functional independence of the two cerebral hemispheres." The facts I have reported may not lead exactly to the conclusion supported in that work, but it is undeniable that the preceding experiments largely confirm those carried out by Dr. Bérillon with Dr. Dumontpallier on "simultaneous bilateral suggestions of differing character for each side in the cataleptic state."

¹⁴ *Automatic Writing* by Frederic W. H. Myers, in the *Proceedings of the Society for Psychical Research*. This very ingenious work would warrant serious study, if in this article I did not intend solely to mention the facts without discussing their interpretation.

I soon realized that it was not even necessary to put her back to sleep for each question. It was enough to suggest once during sleep that she would respond to my questions in writing, so that once awakened, she would continue to do so — always in the same automatic manner. At that moment, L., although awake, no longer seemed to see or consciously hear me; she did not look at me and spoke to everyone else, but not to me. If I asked her a question, she would respond to me in writing and without interrupting what she was saying to others. I had to completely change my tone and even take her hand to force her to listen to me again in the usual way. Then she would shiver slightly and seem a little surprised to see me: “Oh, I forgot you were there.” But as soon as I moved slightly away, she would forget me again and resume responding to me in writing.

V

In light of these new facts, it was hardly possible any longer to fully maintain our previous assertions about the *unconsciousness* of suggestions. That expression, applied to the preceding facts, no longer made much sense: What is an unconscious judgment, an unconscious multiplication? If speech is for us the sign of another person’s consciousness, why should writing not also be such a characteristic sign? One could no longer say that there was in L. an absence of consciousness, but rather two consciousnesses. The subject, having been prepared as previously described and responding by automatic writing, we had the following conversation: “Do you hear me?”

(She responds in writing) “No.”

“But to respond, you must hear.”

“Yes, absolutely.”

“Then how do you do it?”

“I don’t know.”

“There must be someone who hears me.”

“Yes.”

“Who?”

“Someone other than L.”

“Ah! Another person. Shall we call her Blanche?”

“Yes, Blanche.”

“So then, Blanche, do you hear me?”

“Yes.”

Without a doubt, it was I who had suggested the name of this character and thus given it a kind of individuality, but we saw how it had developed spontaneously; I merely gave it a name. When I showed the previous paper to L., a minor incident occurred. She had personal reasons for hating the name Blanche and wanted to tear up the paper where it was written. This detail, along with countless others, proves to us the sincerity of the subject and the absolute unconsciousness with which she had written the name Blanche — to the extent that she did not even want to read it. We had to restart the naming: “What name would you like to have?”

“No name.”

“Yes, it will be more convenient.”

“Fine then, Adrienne¹⁵.”

Somnambulists have their quirks; one had to go along with them. From then on, I had conversations either with L., who responded by speaking, or with Adrienne, who responded by writing. It was enough to change the name to ensure that there was never any mistake — there was no need to induce sleep: the name Adrienne alone was enough to bring about both automatic acts and automatic responses — that is, unconscious ones.

The responses that I obtained in this way are not of great interest; the manner in which they were written is more curious than their content. They were almost always very simple: “yes,” “no,” and very frequently “I don’t know.” I did not see in these responses the slightest trace of any lucidity; nor did I observe any mental suggestion which, according to Mr. Myers, is not uncommon in cases of automatic writing. There was in these responses only a small number of interesting indications, which I will now summarize.

(1) The suggestions that I had always considered unconscious were, in reality, only unconscious for L.; Adrienne always knew them — she could even write them out after awakening. It was she who raised the arms; it was she who counted the signals. “L.,” wrote Adrienne, “did not hear, or if she heard a little, she resisted, and there was conflict.” One day I had a curious proof of this obedience on Adrienne’s part without L.’s knowledge. I suggested one day to Adrienne to come the next day at two o’clock to the office of Dr. Powilewicz. The next day at the appointed time, L. entered the doctor’s office. I was waiting and questioned her. But as she spoke to me (orally), she seemed to experience a strange hallucination: she believed she was at home, taking the furniture of the office as her own, and insisting that she had not gone out. Adrienne, whom I then questioned, responded sensibly in writing that she had come on my instruction, but that L. knew nothing of it. Everything had happened as in ordinary suggestions, but I had not immediately understood it. Needless to say, that evening L. had no recollection whatsoever of her visit to the doctor, whereas Adrienne remembered it very well.

(2) Here is another observation I made by the same method. L. was, as I have said, a severe hysteric; although her crises had greatly diminished in intensity and frequency since the beginning of her hypnotic sessions, she still had them from time to time. When she was in the grip of a hysterical crisis, or shortly after one, automatism had almost entirely disappeared. I still managed to hypnotize her, but Adrienne no longer obeyed — even if I managed to make her write by suggestion, she would write without stopping: “I’m afraid, I’m afraid...” and would not respond to me. It occurred to me that during the hysterical crisis, it was the second personality, Adrienne, who was occupied — and I was able to obtain a kind of demonstration of this. L. had rather complicated crises: after the initial convulsions, she would be overcome by terrifying hallucinations in which hidden

¹⁵ Instead of designating the automatic character in this way, it is clear that I could have suggested to her that she was the spirit of Caesar or of Bossuet; it is very likely that the suggestion would have met no resistance, and L. would have become a true writing medium.

men played a central role. I had never been able to obtain an explanation of these terrors, because in the waking state or even in somnambulism, L. had not the slightest memory of the crisis events. One day I thought to question Adrienne on the matter — in writing — and she recounted all the incidents of the crisis and their origin: “I see at first a curtain, then men hidden behind it who frighten me... in the countryside, on a summer evening, this grandmother, during vacation, two men arrived, then danced in the garden in a big curtain they had taken from the trees and placed behind them — which scared us, and since then I’ve always been afraid.” It should be noted that the very next moment, L., interrogated again in person, forgot all these details and no longer remembered having told me anything. These incidents dated to her early childhood and were clearly the origin of the phobia.

(3) The subject was capable of true catalepsy; she could enter that peculiar state in which the position of the limbs suggests expressions of the entire body — astonishing in their harmony and truthfulness. For a long time, researchers have tried to grasp what happens in the consciousness of a cataleptic, or even to determine whether or not there are any phenomena of consciousness. L., while in catalepsy, did not respond to me at all, or sometimes repeated words like an echo. I addressed Adrienne and instructed her to take a pencil; she did so, yet the whole body remained in catalepsy. I took her left hand and clenched her fist; immediately her face took on an expression of anger, and her left arm launched into punching motions. “Adrienne, what are you doing?” (Her right arm writes, without the body’s expression changing):

“I am furious.”

“At whom?”

“At F.”

“Why?”

“I don’t know... but I am angry.”

I take the left hand, release it, and bring it to her lips. She sends kisses, and her face smiles: “Adrienne, are you still angry?”

“No, it’s gone.”

“And now?”

“Oh, I’m happy.”

“And L.?”

“She knows nothing, she is asleep.”

I say: “Say hello,” and her mouth echoes, “Hello.”

“Adrienne, what do you mean by that?”

“Hello.”

“Does L. know it?”

“No, since she knows nothing.”

(4) L. was also susceptible to lethargy — much more rarely, it is true, and less clearly than the preceding states; it could hardly be induced artificially — L. fell into it spontaneously in the middle of somnambulism. This state began with a general contracture that dissipated on its own; the subject remained in a state of deep sleep with muscular relaxation. The muscles retained a certain hyperexcitability, sometimes very strong — pressure would provoke contracture;

sometimes weak — pressure would provoke only a fleeting contraction of the touched muscle. In this state, I had long known that L. did not move and seemed not to hear. One day, I spoke to Adrienne during this lethargy: “Adrienne, squeeze my hand.” She did. “Write. Do you hear me?”

“Yes.”

“Stand up.”

“My strength is failing.” She responded with a few more monosyllables, and the lethargy dissipated.

Many experiments and studies remained for me to do on this interesting question and on this personality created, so to speak, experimentally, when a very fortunate incident for the patient came to interrupt everything. It was only natural to use the domination I had gained over L. for her own benefit and for her healing, and little by little, through precise commands repeated during somnambulism, I made the gravest symptoms of hysteria disappear — the headaches, the convulsions, the hysterogenic points, etc. The illness diminished day by day, but to my great surprise, the hypnotic sleep diminished at the same time. Lethargy and catalepsy disappeared; the suggestions became less and less clear. L. began once again to hear them, then to respond “yes” as at the beginning, then to discuss them.

One day I pronounced the name Adrienne, and it was L. who responded with much laughter, asking whom I was calling by that name. Adrienne was gone; I have not since been able to revive her or obtain automatic writing. A few days later, moreover, the hypnotic sleep — which had already ceased to be interesting — disappeared completely, and I became unable to put the subject to sleep by any method.

L., since that day, has been doing well and has not had a single crisis in three months; the psychological experiments were therefore conducted for the subject’s own greatest good.

The facts I have just recounted are still very incomplete, since my experiments were interrupted too abruptly; but it is very likely that they can be rediscovered fairly easily. All suggestions must be accompanied by a certain degree of unconsciousness — or rather, to generalize what I have seen — a certain splitting of consciousness. All the phenomena of spiritism, which are frequent, are nothing more than the development of analogous facts. I hope it will not be too difficult to verify and discuss through other experiments the ones I have reported; it will be easier then to draw from these observations all the consequences they contain.

Pierre Janet